



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Natural Resources Conservation Service
655 Parfet Street, Room E200C Lakewood, Colorado 80215
Phone (720) 544-2808 • Fax (720) 544-2965 • www.co.nrcs.usda.gov

Petra Barnes Walker, Public Information Officer
petra.barneswalker@co.usda.gov 720-544-2808

WRP Interim Final Rules Published for Public Comment

Lakewood, CO, February 2, 2009 – The 2008 Farm Bill reauthorized and amended the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) and an interim final rule was published. As a result, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is seeking public comments on the proposed changes. For information the WRP program and how to submit comments, please visit www.co.nrcs.usda.gov.

“WRP helps landowners restore their land to its natural wetland condition,” states Tim Carney, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist, Lakewood, CO. *“The conservation of these lands is critical as they are some of our most precious and fragile natural habitats. This is why the program has an emphasis and priority on wildlife habitat and environmental benefits.”*

WRP is administered by USDA's NRCS and provides technical and financial assistance to eligible landowners to address wetland, wildlife habitat, soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on private agricultural land. The program provides landowners financial incentives to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property. This voluntary program strives to achieve the greatest wetland functions and values and optimize wildlife habitat on every enrolled acre. To date more than 2 million acres have been enrolled in the program.

Wetlands are biologically diverse and dynamic ecosystems that support diverse populations of wildlife, plants, and fish. They supply life-sustaining habitat for hundreds of species, including many of the Nation's endangered and threatened species. They provide a protective buffer for our towns and cities against floods and storm surges. They also buffer coastal areas from erosion. Wetlands also help protect water quality by filtering out pollutants and offer aesthetic and recreational opportunities.

For additional information regarding this news release please contact Petra Barnes Walker, NRCS State Public Affairs Specialist in Lakewood, CO at 720-544-2808 or by emailing petra.barneswalker@co.usda.gov. Program rules including information on providing comments are also available by visiting <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/>.

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